

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING  
OF THE AIRPORT COMMISSION**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Torrance Airport Commission convened in a regular session on Thursday, June 29, 2006 at 7:02 p.m. in the West Annex meeting room at Torrance City Hall.

**2. ROLL CALL**

Present: Commissioners Dingman, Donnellan, Gates, Haddon, Ouwerkerk, Pyles, and Chairperson Tymczyszyn.

Absent: None.

Also Present: Facility Operations Manager Megerdichian and Airport Business Manager Zucker.

**3. FLAG SALUTE**

Commissioner Ouwerkerk led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**4. AFFIDAVIT OF AGENDA POSTING**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Dingman, seconded by Commissioner Haddon, moved to accept and file the report of the City Clerk on the posting of the agenda for this meeting; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

**5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - NONE**

**6. ACTION ITEMS:**

Chairperson Tymczyszyn reviewed the policies and procedures of the Airport Commission.

**6A. REQUEST TO OPERATE BANNER TOWING BUSINESS AT TORRANCE MUNICIPAL AIRPORT – ZAMPERINI FIELD**

Facility Operations Manager Megerdichian introduced the item and requested that the Commission consider recommendation to City Council for Van Wagner Aerial Media to conduct banner tow operations at Torrance Airport. He welcomed Nathan Zucker, General Manager of Van Wagner Aerial Media.

Mr. Zucker thanked the Commission for reconvening and introduced colleagues Jim Butler, founder of Van Wagner Aerial Media, Bill Ulrich, national chief pilot, Charlie Pickett, manager of California operations, and Charles Finkel, counsel.

Mr. Zucker responded to questions raised by Commissioners at the June 8, 2006 Commission meeting. Referring to a request for NTSB reports, he noted that actual reports for the last ten years were included in the material of record.

Mr. Butler provided his background in the aerial advertising business and briefly discussed incidents that occurred in Long Beach last summer, noting that the mix of traffic at Long Beach Airport was not conducive to their banner towing operations. He stated that Van Wagner wanted to make Torrance its home due to its general aviation mix, noting that it has obtained an FAA Certificate of Operation.

Commissioner Haddon received clarification that Van Wagner is licensed for banner towing and skywriting, but that they would conduct banner towing only.

Responding to Commissioner Pyles' inquiry, Mr. Ulrich briefly explained the challenges and procedures associated with towing banners, pilot training programs, and guidelines set by control towers, noting that Van Wagner operates long flights and set routes for national campaigns. He explained that they had 32 highly modified Cubs built to tow 50-foot banners for up to six hours.

When Commissioner Dingman inquired about Van Wagner's operations at Long Beach Airport, Mr. Butler discussed Van Wagner's insurance carrier, experience of their pilots, and safety record since 1952, noting that there has never been an injury to the public.

Mr. Finkel described major incidents in Long Beach that involved a helicopter subcontractor, adding that Van Wagner's insurance coverage with AIG was a major commendation.

In response to Commissioner Ouwerkerk's inquiry, Mr. Zucker stated that there would be no subcontractors used in Torrance and that pilots would be Van Wagner employees. He clarified that Van Wagner has had FAA authorization certificates for 50 years and that they have a Torrance Tower Operations Agreement.

Responding to Commissioner Ouwerkerk's concerns about noise, Mr. Butler assured him that their airplanes are environmentally friendly and do not exceed noise standards.

Chairperson Tymczyszyn received clarification from Mr. Zucker that, although Van Wagner would be permanently based at Torrance Airport, their operations would be conducted primarily in the summer. He added that they would use established A & P mechanics based on the field and that they have applied for a hangar plus tie-down spaces.

In response to Commissioner Donnellan's inquiry, Mr. Zucker stated that three to five airplanes would be permanently based in Torrance and that 95% to 98% of their operations would be long duration flights. With input from Mr. Pickett, he described incidents in Long Beach when banners and a hook were dropped, and emphasized that procedures have been taken so that similar incidents will not occur.

In response to Commissioner Haddon's inquiry, Mr. Zucker indicated that their towropes do not contain metal and that pilots can climb altitudes at 1500 feet per minute.

Responding to Commissioner Gates' inquiry, Mr. Zucker and Mr. Ulrich described their planned ground operations for pickup and drop off at Torrance Airport as well as operations along the coast with other banner tow operators, adding that he did not foresee conflicts with Star Ads, Inc. at Torrance Airport.

When Commissioner Pyles inquired about benefits to Torrance Airport, Facility Operations Manager Megerdichian explained that there are business license fees and a percentage of gross receipts that into the City's Airport Fund, noting that an agreement has not yet been negotiated.

Chairperson Tymczyszyn relayed information that he received from the Long Beach Flight Standards District Office of the FAA regarding the process for local FAA approval and noise level standards. He suggested that noise levels be tested at the same time that drop offs and pickups are demonstrated. He expressed concern that a very steep climb over Crenshaw Boulevard and residential homes in the City of Lomita would be required after eastbound pickup, and suggested that the demonstration include banner towing during early morning and in both directions.

Chairperson Tymczyszyn distributed and reviewed copies of a July 21, 1998 National Transportation Safety Board's Safety Recommendation to the FAA regarding banner towing problems that include banner pickup maneuver, entangled or snarled banner tow lines, and loss of engine power.

Mr. Butler stated that Van Wagner intended to buy ten to 15 new engines from the factory each year and that a new Certificate of Authorization is not required, only coordination with the appropriate FSDO.

Chairperson Tymczyszyn inquired about items #14 and #15 in the Certificate of Waiver or Authorization issued by Florida and included in the material of record. He noted that at Torrance Airport there was not the required distance of 500 feet from an active runway for pickup or 500 feet available from Lowe's Home Center for drop off.

Responding to Commissioner Pyle's inquiry, Mr. Zucker stated that a dropped banner on a runway was very rare and that it would only take a few seconds to pick it up.

Commissioner Ouwerkerk received clarification that ground crews coordinate with the control tower and that Van Wagner's pilot training syllabus is FAA approved.

At 8:15 p.m., Chairperson Tymczyszyn welcomed public comments.

Frank Rizzardi, Carlow Road, stated that the Southwood Riviera Homeowners Association had noise and safety concerns, noting that Lockhard Corporation was asking for a one-year extension for their noise abatement contract.

Mario Lopez, Ridgeland Road, Star Ads, Inc., discussed the potential difficulty of coordinating pickups and drop offs with another company between the ILS and helipad. He noted that there has never been three banner tow operations at Torrance Airport and that he intended to speak with staff about changing his operations to another area on the west end.

Responding to inquiries by Commissioners, Mr. Lopez stated that he has three aircraft, has been in business at Torrance Airport for 15 years, conducts eight to twelve flights per day in the summer, that initial problems with noise abatement requirements were resolved, and that he has never had a problem with the FAA regarding the 500-foot restriction.

When Chairperson Tymczyszyn stated that he did not see any way for Van Wagner to get around the 500-foot clearance restriction, Mr. Finkel suggested that the Commission make a recommendation to City Council with the contingency that an amendment be added to the waiver.

When Mr. Finkel pointed out that the Airport Master Plan allows for three banner tow operations, Commissioner Pyles noted that the Commission recently recommended major review and revision of the Master Plan.

Commissioner Pyles discussed four types of aircraft purpose, noting the extensive development and mixed use at the perimeter of the Airport.

Chairperson Tymczyszyn expressed concern about the eight items listed in the letter from the Long Beach tower manager, noise issues, and noted that the Certificate of Waiver was in basic violation of the charter for operation.

When Victoria Gaal, Ridgeland Road, asked Van Wagner why they wanted to move out of Rialto, Mr. Zucker stated that they were spending so much time flying to and from the beach that they could not give their clients what they paid for.

Ms. Gaal received clarification that Van Wagner's national waiver was not revoked and discussed challenges of space restrictions and wind conditions at Torrance Airport.

Mr. Zucker discussed Van Wagner's experience in operating at different airports and with more confined drop zones than Torrance Airport.

Commissioner Ouwerkerk discussed his concerns regarding noise monitoring, potential for limitations on operations, and provision #15 in the Certificate of Waiver.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Donnellan moved to recommend that City Council deny Van Wagner Aerial Media's request to conduct banner tow operations at Torrance Municipal Airport based on testimony and safety record. Commissioner Haddon seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-2 as reflected in the following roll call vote:

AYES:	Commissioners Dingman, Donnellan, Gates, Haddon, and Pyles.
NOES:	Commissioners Ouwerkerk and Tymczyszyn.

Commissioner Donnellan stated his reasons for making his motion: that there was too great of an exposure to pilots, that bigger engines and more flights would contribute to increased noise, that the pick up area by the helipad could be a safety concern, and due to take offs over Crenshaw Boulevard and the City of Lomita.

**7. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

**7A.** Facility Operations Manager Megerdichian announced that the turnover for the new City Council as well as approval of the Airport Commission Work Plan would be on July 11, 2006.

**7B.** Facility Operations Manager Megerdichian stated that he was informed that the parcel of land adjacent to Costco was no longer being considered for residential development.

**7C.** Following a brief discussion, it was decided that the Commission would go dark in July 2006.

**8. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** At 8:49 p.m., Commissioner Ouwerkerk, seconded by Commissioner Pyles, moved to adjourn the meeting to Thursday, August 10, 2006 at 7:00 p.m., at the West Annex meeting room.

Approved as Submitted August 10, 2006 s/ Sue Herbers, City Clerk
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